



Office of the Mayor

STATEMENT

**Thursday, June 14, 2007
2:25 PM**

Luecke welcomes growth by St. Joseph's High School

Contact: Mikki Dobski, Director of Communications & Special Projects, 235-5855 or 876-1564

Calling St. Joseph's High School "a light to our community," Mayor Stephen J. Luecke today said anticipated growth by the city's Catholic high school illustrates the school's quality and South Bend's community-based strength.

Luecke's comments came in response to an announcement by the Most Rev. John M. D'Arcy, bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, that the high school was considering two alternatives to address its need for growth:

- Renovating its existing facility at Michigan Street and Angela Boulevard.
- Building a new campus on property south of Cedar Street donated by St. Joseph Regional Medical Center.

"Either location signals a strong and vital commitment to the city of South Bend by St. Joseph High School, and our city is honored by the school's tradition of achievement and community service," Luecke said. "Both alternatives present a strong urban presence and reinforce private investment in their surrounding neighborhoods."

For more than nine months, the city has been involved in intensive planning for the reuse of the near-downtown hospital site with Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center and the Near Northeast Revitalization Organization. A possible relocation by St. Joseph High School has been considered along with the more publicized alternative of a mix of new residential housing, office space and commercial properties.

"We've wanted the eventual use to be a real asset for the community. This generous offer by the hospital and this public feasibility study of an exciting option involving St. Joseph High School reflect that concern," Luecke said. "As one of the country's top Catholic high schools, St. Joe is a light to our community, and having that light on a hilltop is fitting for a school whose graduates include a former governor."

A team of six St. Joseph's students recently made it to the final four in the Fed Challenge, a national economics challenge in the nation's capital. It was the school's third trip to nationals since it formed a team in 1999. Since 1953, the school has a history of community service, including an annual day of service each fall in which more than 90 percent of students participate.

"It's good to have options," the mayor said. "Investment in facilities for St. Joseph High School at either location is positive for the City of South Bend and enhances the comprehensive redevelopment efforts under way in the Northeast Neighborhood. If the decision is made to locate at the Medical Center site, a new downtown high school will complement the energy of other investments in the East Bank Village and will enrich both students and faculty with an urban experience. If they expand at their current location, St. Joe will remain rooted in South Bend and will continue to be a great choice for families that choose parochial education for their children, leaving the hospital site available for an exciting mixed-use development with new housing, commercial space and offices."